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The High Price of Dishonesty and Deception

by Roxanne Davies

Of all the horror films to come out of Hollywood, the one that creeped me out the most was *Rosemary's Baby*. The psychological horror flick was written and directed by French-Polish director Roman Polanski, who, despite his personal foibles, is a talented filmmaker.

Polanski's 1967 film follows tormented wife Rosemary Woodhouse (brilliantly portrayed by the waif-like Mia Farrow). Unbeknownst to her, she was chosen to bear the Devil's spawn. Farrow's wide-eyed innocent face fills the screen as she experiences physical and emotional changes beyond her control. When she rips into a piece of raw chicken, it will turn the stomach of the most avid carnivore. Yet it's the last scene that truly shocks. Rosemary walks into a dimly lit chamber to see her baby for the first time. Seated around the room are all the people she thought she could trust: her husband, her doctor, her crazy neighbour, every one of the people closest to her complicit in the diabolical scheme. What terrified me was the ease with which the people closest to the victim were able to cover their deception.

Deception: *anything that deceives or is meant to deceive; a delusion*. For Rosemary, the consequences of deception and lying resulted in the birth of an evil spirit. For our American neighbours, it seems to have resulted in the surprise election of Donald J. Trump. A *New York Times* columnist likened Trump's win to a moral and ethical 9/11. A rich white guy with a trophy wife told his supporters the sky is falling and he would save them. A xenophobic, misogynist of dubious ethics and morals with a short attention span now has the nuclear code. A thin-skinned pugnacious Chicken Little was elected to the most powerful position in the free world.

How on earth could Trump win the election? He wasn't a polished politician; he was an outlier who even alienated fellow Republicans. Because he says it like we think his supporters smugly declared. They were tired of lies from the chattering class, professional pundits, career politicians, financial analysts, industry regulators. Name an industry and its privileged leaders lie.

For Trump, lying is a form of communication and a way of gaining power. We watched and listened with a mixture of horror and fascination as he sniffed his way through an inaugural speech filled with jingoistic rhetoric.

Some say Trump is no fool. He is a communicator who used a kind of wonky neuro-linguistic programming to mesmerize his audience. In 3AM Tweets, he shared his most incoherent ideas and bypassed the bewildered mainstream media. Trump says he fiercely protected his five children against the danger of smoking, drugs and alcohol, yet he has exposed them to the most dangerous and addictive substance on Earth: a lust for power.

For ruthless men and women who strive to win at any cost and make it in a Trumpian universe, the new president provided tactics. Always take control. Act like you know what you're doing even if you don't. Brag about your accomplishments, and never your mistakes. Find your opponents Achilles' heel and never let go. Tell people you will give 100% percent or make it look like you do. And most importantly: even if you lose interest in what you are doing, there will be times when you will have to stretch the truth or downright lie. If women can control their fluttering lashes, they have the uncanny ability to be better liars. Smart agencies and corporations know that. Women are often the face of a company about to deliver some bad news or 'alternative facts.' Intelligent and ambitious men and women must wean themselves off the toxic value of lying to gain power and privilege.

If there is any comfort to the majority of people who did not vote for Trump, this 45th president might be the most analyzed and dissected in recent history. There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in. If Trump fails to deliver what he has promised, let him remember that many of his most ardent supporters pack weapons.

Roxanne Davies lives in North Vancouver and is devoted to writing family memoirs and essays on a variety of topics. roxannemilanadavies@gmail.com

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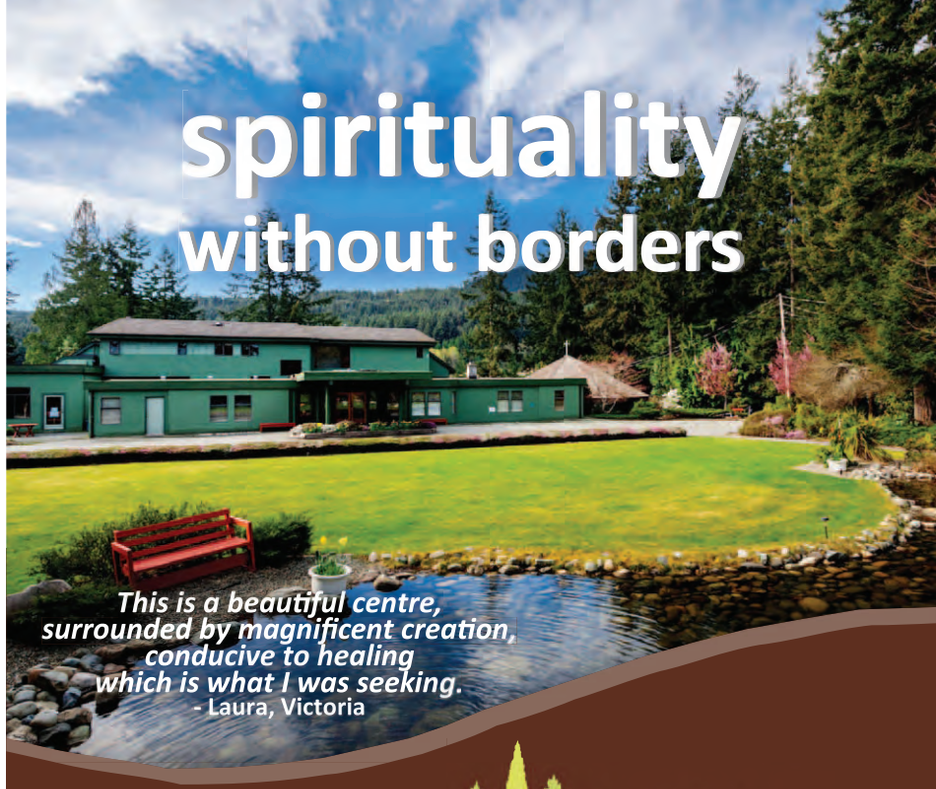
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Trudeau's broken promise and betrayal of democracy

Justin Trudeau committed to replacing the current electoral system in June 2015, shortly before the federal election campaign. His government's first throne speech promised: "2015 will be the last federal election conducted under the first-past-the-post voting system." He has now broken that promise, after setting up a committee to study the issue (and polling a large number of Canadians at: MyDemocracy.ca.)

Across the country, 90% favoured a form of proportional representation.

Calling Trudeua a "liar, " NDP MP Nathan Cullen, who served on the committee, said: "Rather than keep his word to the millions of Canadians who voted for him and hundreds of thousands who engaged in good faith … over this question of how to strengthen and broaden our democracy, Mr. Trudeau chose instead to spit in their faces." Green Party leader Elizabeth May, who also served on the committee, added: "This betrayal will strike much more deeply in the hearts of Canadians than he realizes, particularly among young people. We are in a time of dangerous politics. You must never do anything as a politician to feed cynicism. Cynicism has enough to feed itself. It is work to feed hope. It is work to feed faith. And when you break faith you will reap what you sow."

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Free at last! Canada without NAFTA

by David Orchard

Donald Trump has said he intends to renegotiate or cancel the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This would be good news if we take the opportunity to get out of the NAFTA straitjacket and begin using Canadian resources for the benefit of Canadians.

Under the Canada-US Free Trade Agreement (FTA) – chapters 4 and 9 and NAFTA chapter 6 – Canada gave the US the right to take the same proportion of any good, including all forms of energy, that it was taking over the previous three years, even if Canada itself goes short. The US is now taking about 60% of our oil production and with the prospect of large new pipelines to the US, which cripples the idea of an east-west pan-Canadian line because we have a finite supply of oil, that percentage will rise. Under (NA)FTA, the US has the right to continue taking this 60%, and more, of our total supply, in perpetuity. Further, Canada has agreed to never charge the US more for any good, including all forms of energy, than it charges Canadians.

Meanwhile, in addition to charging some of the world's lowest royalty rates, we are selling our oil to the US at far less than the world price – a subsidy from Canada to the US of roughly $30 billion per year – while Canada pays some $10 billion a year to import foreign oil, mostly from Saudi Arabia and the US, into eastern Canada at world price. Does that make sense?

No self-respecting country would, as Canada did under Brian Mulroney and Jean Chrétien, sign away its resources, its sovereignty and its future in this way and most Canadians are still unaware our country has done so. (Mexico refused to sign these energy sections in NAFTA and exempted itself from their terms.)

> John A. Macdonald called free trade with the US "veiled treason." A century later, Pierre Elliott Trudeau called the FTA a "monstrous swindle."

Eighty percent of the world's oil resources are held by state-controlled oil companies. Yet, in the 1990s, Progressive Conservative and Liberal governments privatized and sold our national oil company, Petro-Canada, which in a few years had grown to become one of Canada's largest companies. Norway, which has less oil than Canada, voted to stay out of the EU and today has a trillion dollar (and growing) surplus. It has used its oil and its national oil company, Statoil, to make Norwegians the richest people on Earth with free childcare, free dental care for everyone under18, free university education and generous old age pensions. There is zero government debt and homelessness is virtually non-existent.

By contrast, Canada, a far richer country than Norway, has massive provincial and federal debt, totalling some $1.2 trillion, after decades of pouring increasing amounts of oil, gas and other resources across the border. The provinces are desperately offering to sell off profitable crown corporations to pay their bills, while also implementing huge budget cuts. Canada has miserly old age pensions, high university tuition and no national free pharmacare, childcare or dental care.

If we continue in this way, the resources will be gone. Norway will hand its savings to its grandchildren, but what will we say to our generations to come?

Algeria used its oil to build Sonatrach into the largest company in Africa. Mexico's publicly owned national oil company, Pemex, is Latin America's second largest company, producing 40% of Mexico's federal government revenue. Italy's state controlled oil and gas giant, ENI, brings in $150 billion a year. Brazil's publicly controlled Petrobras has grown into a world leader of advanced technology, the southern hemisphere's largest company; its power kept Brazil's stock market steady during the 2008 whiplash. Libya, until it was subjected to a horrific US-led NATO attack in 2013, in which Canada played a significant role, used its oil revenue to move its citizens from the poorest in the world in 1960 to the highest standard of living in Africa.

NAFTA's Chapter 11 contains a dispute settlement provision allowing US and Mexican corporations to sue Canada for any law or regulation, which they think causes them "loss or damage" and which they feel *continued p.23 ...*

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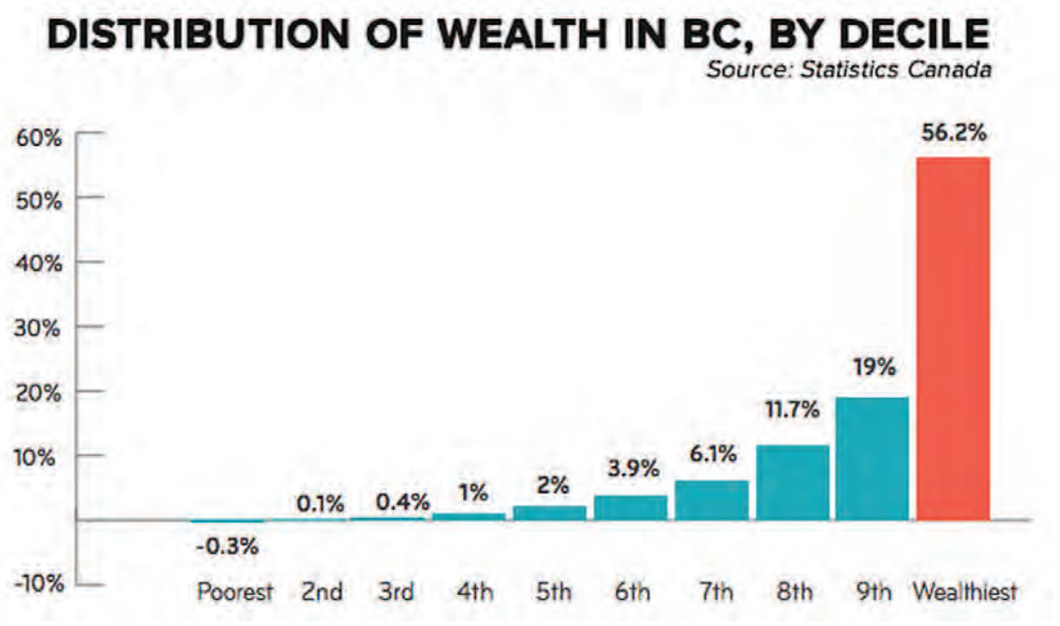
We can't afford Christy Clark's government

by Bruce Mason

We can't continue to overpay Christy Clark and Rich Coleman & Company while they extract wealth for their election donors and foreign investors. BC's in bad shape. For too long, the province's deterioration has been ignored, neglected or deliberately misdiagnosed. Instead, the standing-government's focus is the lucrative business of fund-raising, raking in $12.3 million last year – $8 million from corporations – including controversial pay-for-play dinners with the premier, some with a tab as high as $20,000. The pay-off included topping up Clark's salary, a practice banned everywhere else except Saskatchewan.



> If this were in Russia, or China, the Balkans, or some developing-world country, it would just be written off as nepotism or corruption. Checks and balances are important and hopefully this will spur British Columbians to take a closer look at how their government behaves.

A recent exposé of the corruption of Clark's government by one of the world's most-highly regarded sources, the *New York Times,* was greeted with a media maelstrom, long-overdue gasps and many red faces. "British Columbia: The 'Wild West' of Canadian Political Cash," the headline screamed. But it's not new news. BC's local media has repeatedly reported on this issue. Why did it take the *New York Times* to shock a global audience in summing up the warning signs of our government's bad habits? The rhetoric is a lot like confirming the causes of their persistent cough and shortness of breath to a two-pack-a-day smoker who has heard the warnings a million times.

Christy, apparently, has needed more than her $195,000 premier's salary, plus additional perks and benefits. Post-*Times* fallout, she vowed to quit her additional $50,000 annual stipend – $300,000, in total – in favour of a filter-tipped expense account. But BC neoliberal outliers, caught sneaking an oil-addicted puff, with the other hand in a cookie jar, won't quit or cut down on their consumption of large corporate and foreign donations.

Times reporter Dan Levin justified his disclosures as a "Kafkaesque dystopian nightmare of shady politics and conflict of interest. If this were in Russia, or China, the Balkans, or some developing-world country, it would just be written off as nepotism or corruption. Checks and balances are important and hopefully this will spur British Columbians to take a closer look at how their government behaves."

Among other things, the *Times* noted Clark Liberals pocketed more than $718,000 from Kinder Morgan, the infamous, Texas-based pipeline giant whose Trans Mountain pipeline Christy just rubber-stamped with a wink, a grin and a green light.

Reaction to threats of corruption included our woefully out-of shape, out-of-touch, many-titled and entitled Deputy Premier, Minister of Natural Gas Development, and Minister Responsible for Housing Minister, Rich Coleman (whew). "Laughable," he said, adding, "I do find it a bit rich when they've just spent about a billion dollars on the presidency in US." Rich, who if re-elected may also be appointed Minister of Silly Walks, added, "We go out and work very hard to raise money and make those connections."

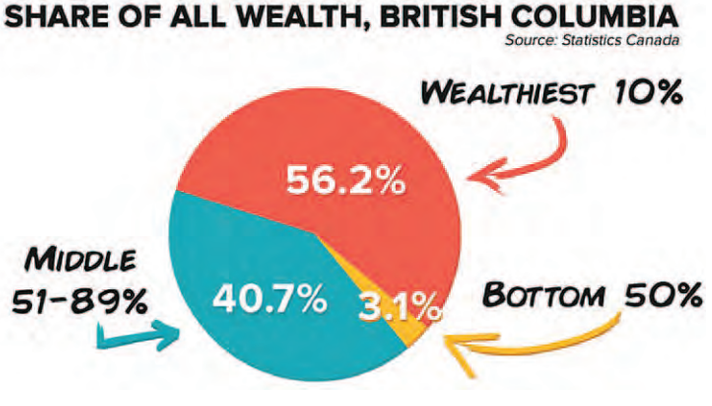
That recalls his previous insults, especially the one regarding unaffordable accommodation: "I guess some people just have to get up and whine every day."

The costs of making the Liberal war chest the top priority are enormous and twinge-worthy.

The Broadbent Institute's *PressProgress* (www.pressprogress.ca) recently published three graphs, which confirm the results. The prognosis is as clear and worrisome as medical charts. While Christy took credit for jobs created, so-called balanced budgets and the elusive joys of pipe-dreamed fracked LNG, a very small group has absconded with BC's wealth.

Clark's carefully crafted takeaways and talking points don't ever include this jaw-dropping divide between extreme wealth and poverty in BC, currently Canada's highest and growing exponentially.

This disparity has also been reported (see *Common Ground*, June 2015) by Andrew MacLeod in his best-selling, award-winning book, *A Better Place on Earth: The Search for Fairness in Super Unequal British Columbia* (Harbour). Once again, it's clear confirmation that this province's obscene inequity is the direct result of the BC government's deliberate policy to shift the tax burden away from wealthy donors.



Earnings of the top 10% began to spike at the 2000 millennium, while the share of BC's *continued p.21 ...*

Earth-friendly diets

Some people are saying, "Take extinction off your plate." *What?* I already take shorter showers. Every week, I deposit my recycling into the right bins. I walk whenever I can. I ride my bike *a lot*, when it's not so icy I'll kill myself. I car-share. Isn't that enough?

It seems not. Agriculture is one of the largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions – greater than all transport put together – and our current dietary choices are propelling us toward extinction.

Rearing livestock for animal products requires *far* more land, water and energy than producing plant foods. Producing a kilo of beef generates 27 kilo of CO2, compared to 0.9 kg per kilo of lentils. That's 30 times as much! While new technologies for animal farming are available, a recent study found they only reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 9%.

Many scientists are calling for a great reduction in livestock production.

One kilo of beef delivers 194 grams protein; one kilo of lentils: 246 grams protein. According to a 2016 Oxford study, adopting vegan diets globally would cut food-related emissions by 70%. That's an excellent reason to order falafels or curried chickpeas rather than a burger or fried chicken. But how can you make lentils taste even remotely as good? One can start by picking up a veg. cookbook or doing a web search for "vegan lentil recipe." You'll find 825,000 tasty results within 0.51 seconds.

The Scientific Committee of the Dietary Guidelines – a conservative group – now provides evidence that diets with more plant foods and less animal products are linked with less environmental damage. Many scientists are calling for a great reduction in livestock production to reverse climate change and to use less water, fossil fuels, pesticides and fertilizers.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics makes the point that, compared with producing 1 kilo of beef protein, 1 kg protein from kidney beans requires 18 times less land, 10 times less water, 9 times less fuel, 12 times less fertilizer, and 10 times fewer pesticides. Beef production generates considerably more manure waste than other animal or fish farming, but they are all strong polluters. Pig farming creates immense toxic manure ponds. The Environmental Protection Agency states that about 70% of all water pollution in rivers and lakes in the US results from animal farm waste.

The 620 million chickens slaughtered every year in Canada – plus 9 billion each year in the US – create a lot of chicken shit before they die. And that's not counting the waste that comes out when they travel down the conveyer belt as their throats are slit and tumble into what workers call fecal soup. No wonder chickens are linked with salmonella food poisoning.

The use of antibiotics as growth promoters and to prevent and treat farm animal diseases generates antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Antibiotic resistance passes to humans, causing difficult-to-treat illnesses, resulting in greater morbidity, mortality and health care costs.

Does this situation strike you as crazy? By relying on meat and other animal products, we make ourselves obese; raise our risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension and cancers; and then destroy our planet. Want to really make a change?

Vesanto Melina is a Vancouver dietitian (www.nutrispeak.com) and a member of Meatless Meetup.

EVENT: February 24, 7:15 PM: A showing of the documentary Cowspiracy should make for an interesting discussion afterwards. Register at https://www.meetup.com/MeatlessMeetup/events/236729787/

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Supplement your heart

by Krista Boulding

February is heart month. Not only should we celebrate the emotional heart, but we also need to honour the health of our anatomical heart.

The heart, arteries, veins and blood make up the cardiovascular system. This system is primarily responsible for delivering oxygen and nutrients to our cells and removing wastes. The heart can pump 2,500-5,000 gallons of blood at 100,000 beats per day to accomplish these important tasks. The heart is a powerful little machine that needs daily support to ensure it remains healthy and active throughout our lives.

According to Statistics Canada, heart disease is the second leading cause of death. Every seven minutes, someone will die from a heart attack or stroke. It is known as the silent killer because most problems go undetected until it becomes too late. But let's focus on the positive; prevention is our best medicine. What can we do to keep our hearts beating to their fullest so we can live a long and healthy life? We need to get educated.

The term cardiovascular disease (CVD) is actually referring to the health of our arteries. Arteries can become clogged with a plaque build-up that impedes blood flow and can arrest it altogether. When blood flow to the heart stops, a person suffers a heart attack. When blood flow to the brain stops, a person suffers a stroke. This plaque build-up is called atherosclerosis and is absolutely in direct relation to our diets and lifestyle. The good news is this can be completely prevented and even reversed.

Studies have shown that people with diets low in essential fatty acids are at an increased risk for heart disease. Omega 3s, whether from plant or animal sources, have a protective effect on the cardiovascular system. They can lower LDL cholesterol, triglyceride levels, blood pressure and also inhibit platelet aggregation. We must add cold-water fish to our diet, such as salmon, sardines or halibut. If you don't *continued p.23...*

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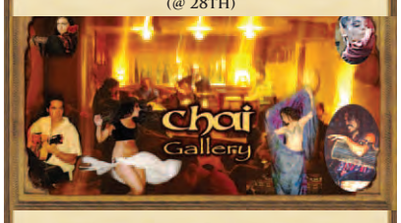

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Don't let heart disease & stroke sneak up on you

by David Sculthorpe

Prevention is the best medicine

What if I told you that up to 80 percent of premature heart disease and stroke are preventable? For every 10 people diagnosed with these conditions before age 75, we could have prevented eight of them.

It's true, and a shocking statistic, when you think about it because heart disease and stroke continue to be leading causes of death in this country.

> When I do get into the rhythm of being active, my stamina improves and I know I'm prolonging my life...

At this point, you may be asking yourself, "If we can save eight out of 10 people, why aren't we doing more? Why does heart disease and stroke still take a life every seven minutes?"

What's holding us back? Usually, it comes down to two factors: 1) People think it's never going to happen to them. 2) Changing habits is hard.

Eating better and moving more is challenging for most people, including myself. I try to work out at least three times a week, but all too often I'm too busy or too tired to get to it. I try to walk to and from work every day, but there are many days when I'm in too much of a rush to get to work or eager to get home to my wife and kids so I take the car.

When I do get into the rhythm of being active – doing cardio classes, getting up a little earlier to make the walk or fit in some exercise before work – my mood is better, my stamina improves and I know I'm prolonging my life by improving my overall health. And I know being too busy is the worst excuse for not being active.

The saying "Use it or lose it" definitely applies. I want to be walking, skiing, playing tennis and being active long after I've retired. And I know the best way to ensure that happens is to be doing more of those things right now.

There's a lot each of us can do to reduce our own risk. But we can't do it alone. Preventing that 80 percent of premature heart disease and stroke will take the full engagement of governments, industry, schools, the healthcare system, every aspect of society. It will also take our best minds, such as researchers like Dr. Grant Pierce.

Dr. Pierce, a professor of medicine at the University of Manitoba and the Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences at St. Boniface Hospital, found that consuming ground flaxseed can dramatically reduce blood pressure, having the same positive effect as medication. Imagine something as simple as adding three tablespoons a day to home-cooked meals has the potential to reduce the number of heart attacks and stroke by as much as 50 percent.

Research like this, which was made possible by Heart and Stroke Foundation donors, gets me excited because I passionately believe prevention is our biggest defence against heart disease and stroke. I can't stress this enough: we're up against two of the leading killers of Canadians. We need to throw everything we've got at them.

That's why we launched the Heart and Stroke Foundation blog. Here, you'll find the latest innovations in heart and stroke research plus heart-healthy recipes, inspiring stories of change and survival, and simple, tangible ideas that will help you and your family feel better and live longer and stronger. Our aim is to stop heart disease and stroke in its tracks.

I hope you will join us on this journey and visit our blog regularly. We look forward to hearing from you and sharing your ideas.

Are you at risk? Find out by taking the free online Heart&Stroke Risk Assessment at https://ehealth.heartandstroke.ca/

David Sculthorpe is the CEO at the Heart and Stroke Foundation.
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Getting to the bottom of the opioid crisis

It starts by looking at prescribing practices

More than a decade ago, UBC's Therapeutics Initiative (TI) published a very alarming newsletter. It made virtually no waves at the time, but it struck me as a dire prediction of the state of prescribing in British Columbia.

The newsletter simply asked two questions about benzodiazepine use in BC. This class of drugs include products like Ativan and Valium – or generic drugs that end in 'pam' – and zopiclone and are typically prescribed for anxiety and insomnia. The TI asked how many people in BC were using benzos and of those, how many were using them contrary to recommendations?

As prescription drugs go, benzos are widely, widely used even though they are recommended only for "short-term" use, typically less than 14 days. The benzos are not supposed to be taken over the long term because they are considered highly "habit forming," the euphemistic way of saying they can be addictive. Once you take them for too long, stopping can be hell and those who try to quit abruptly will face withdrawal symptoms so bad they'll just go back on the drug.

Over time, benzodiazepines lose their effectiveness, yet there is good evidence that when a patient becomes tolerant, the doctor may just increase the dose. Long-term use of the drugs can cause learning, memory and attention problems and their use is linked to falls, injuries, hip fractures and other types of accidents. The other important thing is that the benzos are frequently found on the street and up to 80% of street drug users are also taking benzos.

The TI's analysis found that nearly 10% of the BC population – about 400,000 people at the time – used benzos (based on 2002 data) and of those, 170,000 people received amounts "incompatible with short-term or intermittent use." In other words, almost 5% of the BC population were essentially at risk of being physically dependent on a drug they got from a prescription pad.

The current opioid crisis seems a modern version of the same phenomenon replaying itself, but this time the stakes are much, much higher. Even though we have some of the best monitoring systems in the country – e.g. BC PharmaNet, a computerized, province-wide drug data system – it doesn't stop dangerously poor prescribing and poor monitoring by those whose job it is to protect patients: the BC College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Searching for insight into BC's current opioid crisis, I came across a 2015 report titled "Together We Can Do This," written by a panel of 73 experts in addiction medicine and pharmaceutical policy in BC. It helpfully maps out why BC broke all records in overdose deaths last year (914) and why, unless there is drastic action to improve prescribing, people in this province will continue to die from overdoses in massive rates. These experts lay out a series of strategies to address BC's opioid addiction, an urgent cause given we've got among the highest overdose-related death rates in the world.

The report noted BC "dispenses more than double the amount of opioids compared to Quebec, the lowest opioid dispensing province. Additionally, from 2005 to 2011, the rate of dispensing strong opioids in BC increased by almost 50% overall, including a 135% increase in oxycodone dispensation."

Now, with thousands of addicts in BC and daily reports of new deaths, there is a lot of pre-election interest on the part of the reigning BC Liberals, as money is doled out for safe injection sites, naloxone kits – the drug to revive a person who is overdosing – and increasing the training of emergency personnel. BC's provincial health officer is talking about "clean heroin" and giving addicts provincially subsidized opioids, yet all this energy trying to clean up the damage misses the point that it was mostly created in the

Addiction, trauma and dispossession

by Gabor Maté

In my 12 years of work as a physician in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, I learned a lot from my patients. Many of them, a tragically disproportionate number, were First Nations people. Through the generosity and courage of their sharing, I saw that the sources of addiction do not originate in the substances people use, but in the trauma they endured. In fact, the self-medications my patients employed were an understandable response to a set of unnatural circumstances, namely the historical trauma inflicted on First Nations throughout Canadian history and up to the present. I offer a few points raised in an article of mine published in 2016 in the *Globe and Mail*.

First Nations history must be taught fully and in unsparing detail in our schools. All Canadians should know, for example, that 50 years ago it was not unheard of for a four-year-old girl to have a pin stuck in her tongue for the crime of speaking her mother language and later endure serial rape by teachers and religious mentors. Such were the antecedents of today's drug use and suicidal anguish. Intergenerational trauma is directly related to addiction realities of today.

The resonant values, brilliant art, stories and wisdom culture of First Nations people should be introduced in Canadian schools. Canadians must be helped to see their First Nations peers in their fullness, which includes their humanity, grandeur, unspeakable suffering and strength.

We must renounce any political, economic or social policy that reinforces the colonial trauma of disempowerment, loss and dispossession. Not another square centimetre of Native land must be disturbed, not a blade of grass cut, not one more drop of water diverted, not a millimetre of pipeline laid without First Nations agreement.

> I saw that the sources of addiction do not originate in the substances people use, but in the trauma they endured.

Institutions and individuals interacting with First Nations people must become deeply trauma-informed. Judges, teachers, law-enforcement personnel, nurses, doctors, psychiatrists, social workers, public employees and policy-makers all must understand what trauma is – its multiple impacts on human mentality and behaviour and how to address it. Without such information, as I have witnessed repeatedly, the best-meaning people can unwittingly re-traumatize those who can least bear further pain and loss. Practices that devastate families must be stopped, such as the frequent apprehension of children without restorative and compassionate family-building support.

Alternative forms of justice must be developed, aligned with Native traditions and in consultation with First Nations. The implicit racism in our law-enforcement institutions must be openly acknowledged and cleansed. Powerfully beneficial traditional healing practices must be researched, taught, encouraged. We need to celebrate the First Nations cultural renaissance, a tribute to human resilience, now taking place.

Economic and social conditions that engender despair must be addressed, with the utmost urgency. If we could spend more than $15-billion on our self-declared mission to help the people of Afghanistan, surely we can find the resources in our rich land to help redeem people whom our history continues to victimize.

A renowned speaker, and bestselling author, **Dr. Gabor Maté** is highly sought after for his expertise on a range of topics including addiction, stress and childhood development. www.drgabormate.com

first place by poor prescribing and poor drug policies.

That's the view of this expert panel, which concluded, "Despite the scale of the present public health problem, strategies to meaningfully address unsafe prescribing have not been implemented." They add that many people who are addicted to heroin or other intravenous drugs started out with pharmaceutical opioids and "ultimately, prescribers are largely responsible for the burgeoning illicit market in pharmaceutical opioids that has developed on the streets of BC." And here's the kicker: "The entry of organized crime groups into the manufacturing of counterfeit pharmaceutical opioids, which often contain fentanyl, to fuel the street market for illicit or diverted opioids is arguably a direct result of long-standing, unsafe physician prescribing practices."

Added all together, the crisis is a political and medical boondoggle. Like the dangerous abundance of benzodiazepine use in BC the TI documented a decade ago, we are seeing the same sort of lax approach to prescribing around the opioids. The headlines may focus on the illicit fentanyl-spiked drugs killing citizens at astonishing rates, but the real story is in the high rate of opioid abuse and addiction happening in the wider BC population. In the wider pool of opioid addicts are our friends and neighbours who have thousands of prescription pills, including Dilaudid, Oxycontin, morphine, T-3s and many other opioid pills, sitting in their medicine cabinets, leaving them and other family members who might want to experiment open to abuse.

In my small circle of friends, I know of at least two men who had hip surgery last year and both were discharged with scripts of 100 pills of Oxycontin, enough to turn both of those men into addicts. I know teenagers who were given Oxycontin following wisdom teeth extraction. And another friend, a very successful professional, came within inches of being addicted to the painkillers he was prescribed for a lower back problem.

We've got many reasons to vote in a new government in May. Our spectacular overdose death continues to climb.

What can we do if those prescribing the opioids simply don't know the potential harm they could be causing? It has been well documented that our physicians' dependence on weapons-grade opioids has been shaped by the drug industry. In the mid-1990s, Purdue Pharma, the makers of Oxycontin, spent millions underwriting Canada's pain guidelines, paying "key opinion leaders" in the physician community to downplay the dangers of opioids and infiltrating medical school textbooks and medical schools, teaching our young doctors about managing pain. Opioids are very effective for pain, but for many people, there are many cheaper, safer, simpler and far less addictive medicines that can effectively treat pain instead of the expensive patented opioids pushed by their makers.

To my mind, the biggest scandal is that physicians continue to allow themselves to listen to pharmaceutical industry messages and to be educated by the drug salesmen and tainted experts. Many doctors won't be schmoozed by drug reps, but others don't see a problem. Hence, this is not the last prescribing disaster we will have to deal with.

I wish I could say the BC Liberals are doing all the right things, carefully monitoring prescribing and using their considerable clout through PharmaCare to stop this carnage. But they're not. Beholden to pharma's donations, they act as if powerless to stop the flow of prescribed opioids. We used to have programs in place that monitored prescribing, but there has been no political will to restart them. BC PharmaCare no longer takes advice from the Therapeutics Initiative and we've seen the slow death of drug safety evaluations in BC since the 2012 Ministry of Health firing scandal.

The BC College of Physicians and Surgeons will pretend to be tough with new guidelines and try to crack the whip on flagrantly bad opioid prescribing, but it may just drive even more people to the street to find the pain relievers they've become addicted to.

We've got many reasons to vote in a new government in May. Our spectacular rate of overdose deaths continues to climb. It is a national shame that deserves local blame. Christy Clark's government's addiction to donor dollars continues to make us a laughingstock of the world and the only ones not laughing are the dead, the dying and the addicted.

Alan Cassels is an author and drug policy researcher in Victoria.

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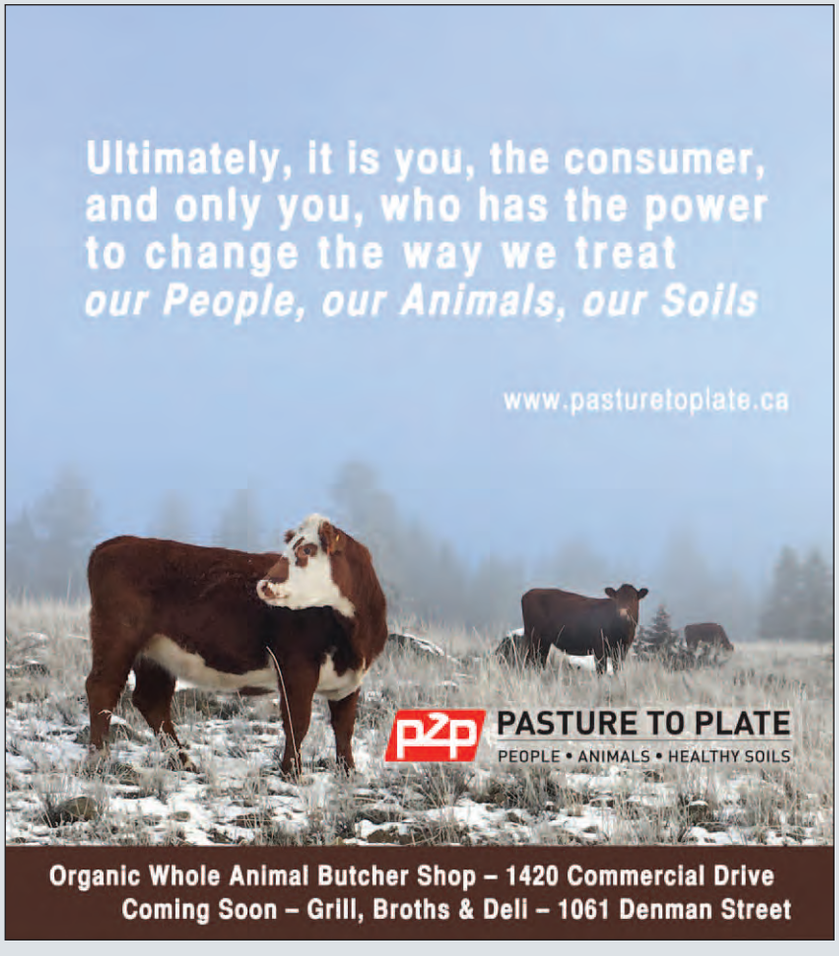
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Mac McLaughlin

StarWise

February 2017

WE ARE LIVING in very interesting times and it is highly likely things are going to get a whole lot more interesting as we move through 2017. Many people are afraid, depressed, scared and horrified. Everyone has a theory, an angle or some sort of take as to what will unfold this year. My wife seemed a bit depressed the day after Trump won the US election. I asked her what was wrong. She said she just felt very down and worried about the state of affairs in the world. I told her if you want the world to be a better place, meditate more and give more love whenever and however you can. If we want love and peace, we must be loving and peaceful.

Now just imagine if Mr. Trump and Mr. Putin were taken out of the equation. Would we be in a better place? Maybe so. Well, according to the stars, it is a high probability that this scenario may take place. Vladimir Putin's chart is indicating the likelihood of an illness along with serious infighting and competition amidst the power types in Russia. He may have to step down or he may be ousted. A fateful, climatic and very dramatic solar eclipse takes place on August 21, 2017 that will have a major effect on Mr. Trump's destiny and the destiny and fate of the US. Impeachment is likely and the stars are indicating a very stirred-up time in which anything can, and probably will, happen. All will be changed by September 2017.

In the meantime, another very interesting planetary configuration takes shape that started in January 2017 and will be in play until October 2017. The planetary configuration involves Jupiter and Uranus as they form an opposition aspect. Jupiter travels through Libra creating a combination that indicates a striving for justice, fairness, balance and harmony. Uranus moves through Aries indicating a time of revolutionary upheaval and massive movements to bring about dynamic change in the world. When we put these two dynamic forces into the cosmic blender, we can expect no less than some type of revolutionary activity to take place. This configuration took place at the time of the French revolution. Everything that needs to be changed – women's rights, Black Lives Matter, etc. – is going to be challenged. We're mad as hell and we're not going to take it any longer. Well, I'm not mad as hell. Actually, I'm very determined to meditate more and to give more love. And if there is any way I can help my brothers and sisters, I will do so. Only love will do – only love.

Mac McLaughlin has been a practising, professional astrologer for more than four decades. His popular **Straight Stars** column ran in Vancouver's largest weekly newspaper for 11 years. Email mac@macsstars.com or call 604-731-1109.

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ARIES Mar 21 - Apr 19
Possibly, you haven't noticed, but there is a fuse burning and there is about to be an explosion in your life. Hopefully, it's an explosion of light, love and hope that propels you far into the future. You are the basic archetype and forerunner of things to come. Lead the way.

TAURUS Apr 20 - May 21
Loosen up, lighten up and make yourself ready for a dynamic ride into the future. Oh, you have time to play and ponder it all, but all is about to soon change. Taurus never changes willingly, but you might consider different probabilities and possibilities the future may present. Embrace it all.

GEMINI May 22 - Jun 20
Expansive Jupiter casts his special energy and blessings your way bringing opportunities for growth and advancement. Saturn casts his glance bringing his special hidden blessings that may not, on first inspection, seem like blessings. Hard work, sacrifice, dedication, devotion and discipline come into the long-term play. Gains and losses are indicated.

CANCER Jun 21 - Jul 22
Ahh, Moon Child, what to do? It seems to me many of you are in the midst of some type of spiritual unfoldment. Life may not have panned out as you had expected. In the wake of failed dreams, many new vistas are taking shape. Travels, far and wide, are indicated.

LEO Jul 23 - Aug 22
The lunar eclipse on February 10 will illuminate your inner psyche. Interestingly, most of the planets are casting fine energy into your sign. 'Innovate and create' is your mantra for the month. Take things slow as you are in your solar low until February 18. The road ahead is pretty clear.

VIRGO Aug 23 - Sep 22
Your solar low of the year begins on February 18. Basically, give yourself five days before and after your birth date as the solar low period. It just means it is time to nurture and nourish yourself. Your pathway may not be as clear-cut as you would like it to be.

LIBRA Sep 23 - Oct 22
Read the introduction regarding the Jupiter-Uranus opposition as it relates strongly to your sign. It's time for growth and expansion in many areas now. Don't be afraid to shake things up and do something totally radical. Also watch out for doing too much, if that makes any sense at all.

SCORPIO Oct 23 - Nov 21
The area of your solar chart that indicates romance, entertainment and children is very activated beginning February 18. Activity regarding the above topics could come into play. Health and dietary concerns could be in the mix as well. Look at the long view as late 2017 and 2018 is looking very promising for Scorpio.

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22 - Dec 21
It looks like a time has come in which you have to re-invent yourself. My Sagittarius grapevine tells me there has been quite a lot of dissatisfaction and possible frustration with how things have been. Let go of what is not worthy or healthy in the next several months.

CAPRICORN Dec 22 - Jan 19
A couple of dates are noteworthy in February. The first one is February 7 and 8. Challenges and changes are likely on these dates and emotions will be running high. Then, on February 21 and 22, another set of dynamic circumstances comes into play. Power plays and powerful days come to pass.

AQUARIUS Jan 20 - Feb 19
The lunar eclipse on February 10 will bring clarification and all kinds of information your way. Communicate and relate and take things a step further as the stars are leaning in your favour. Timing is everything and it is likely you will be in the right place at the right time.

PISCES Feb 20 - Mar 20
The solar eclipse on February 26 is important and revelatory especially if you were born within a few days of this date. Pay attention to your dreams and intuition as they will provide all kinds of hints and information for your evaluation. Be clear and honest as the tendency to cut corners will be strong.

The real measure of self-growth

Your visions will become clear only when you can look into your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes. – C.G. Jung

When we say, "This is who I am," what does it really mean? We have our own perceptions of who we are, but they can be biased, affected by a critical eye through which we see ourselves or by the blind spots that prevent us from seeing our own unconscious motivations or reactions.

Further, we are not discrete entities unto ourselves. We always exist in relation to something or someone: our jobs, nature, where we live, sunlight, parents, children, partners, friends, political parties, groups. The list is endless.

We also may react differently to different people and situations. We may show anger and polarity with a partner or child, but show only kindness and gentleness to a grandmother or best friend.

Naturally, most of us like to define ourselves by who we are when we are at our best. However, there may be times when we come from a less evolved place – times when we go into polarity, anger, judgment and even shaming.

Evolving takes work.

It is more than reading about spirituality.

Generally, we justify our behaviour by the fact that the object of our disdain somehow deserves it. We may see them as "less than" us. We can also do this in relationships when we think we are right and the other is wrong. Still, everyone deserves the right to be heard and to express their opinion.

It seems ubiquitous in our world that these polarities are formed and played out at every level, from the neighbourhood to the international scene, and they seem to arise when we do not see others as our equals.

You may say, "But we are not all equal!" Some are smarter, prettier, have more wealth, more athletic ability, more fame or are even more evolved. This is not what equality is about. Seeing others as our equal means seeing they are just as important as we are, and to understand we are all at different places in our circumstances, growth and awareness. We do not see a kindergarten student as less equal – in this sense – than a university student.

In terms of personal growth or spirituality, some are at a kindergarten level and some at a post-doctoral level. We need not judge this level of growth any more than we would judge someone's academic level. Yes, some are more advanced, but that does not make them better than one who is just struggling to survive, much less grow.

We may not be aware of the ways we speak to or act towards others that come from a place of superiority. If we find ourselves criticizing, judging or gossiping, we are really making them "less than" us, making it easier to simply discount them.

Evolving takes work. It is more than reading about spirituality or attending workshops. It is being aware of situations or circumstances where our ego is driving the process. A client who was excited about her spiritual path once spoke of how evolved she was becoming, but had a husband who "just didn't get it!" and rolled her eyes for emphasis.

The measure of our growth and evolvement is not how many workshops we have attended. It is what we do in our most challenging moments and how we treat others day-to-day.

Gwen Randall-Young is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. For articles and information about her books, "Deep Powerful Change" hypnosis CDs and "Creating Effective Relationships" series, visit www.gwen.ca 'Like' Gwen on Facebook for daily inspiration.

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Christy, Justin, Kinder Morgan

Take a hike

by Bruce Mason

Change agents worth following

by Bruce Mason

The 1% who have pocketed, and hidden, half of the world's wealth are delighted by people who think nothing will ever change. In that context, mere optimism is a political act. So, too, is pessimism; acquiescence is one form of obedience. To look at the myriad difficult problems facing humanity directly in the eye, as challenges and opportunities to create a better world to leave to our grandchildren, is somewhat radical in these dark times.

Poll after reliable poll shows that the majority of people in BC oppose the Christy Clark/Justin Trudeau fossil fuel mega-projects, as much as two-to-one.

Some say we are in a tomb; others think of it as a womb and suggest we breathe and push. One bright light to follow in our ongoing global rebirth is Stewart Phillip, Grand Chief of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC), and spokesperson for the international Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion.

Recently, in the fight against pipelines, he has wisely warned: "This is a global movement and not just a fight against another dirty pipeline... This is not simply an indigenous issue; climate change and the catastrophic impacts that we have witnessed to date and the potential impacts that will manifest in the future, are a matter of grave concern of all people around the world."

The UBCIC

For their rapidly growing number of friends and allies, the UBCIC have created the "Coast Protectors Pledge" at coastprotectors.ca. Another site is RAVEN (www.raventrust.com). However, once again, Phillip notes, "People shouldn't become *continued p.18...*

Whenever our Premier (or PM) crave something "world class," we recommend Vancouver's Seaside Greenway, which includes the Stanley Park Seawall. As the planet's longest, uninterrupted waterfront path, it's one of humanity's most inspiring Commons. Awe-inspiring, priceless *and* free, experiencing it does one a world of good.

But it's never free from threat, much like many irreplaceable regions – the Peace, Prince Rupert and Haida Gwaii, Howe Sound, the once-mighty Fraser – and too many places where Clark recklessly proposes deadly fossil-fuel mega-projects. One has to wonder why anyone would risk screwing up, as the world embraces cheaper, renewable options and better jobs.

Long walks through sacred spots – in 'our moccasins,' work boots or flip-flops – should be leadership prerequisites. Contemplate before judging those who Christy calls the "Voices of No." See clearly why her "Path to Yes" is the wrong direction and a sacrilege.

Disagree? Well, the Burrard Inlet is a damn good reason to say "No." It's our living room, meeting place, our Malecón and public square. It's the stage for Vancouver's 40th Annual Folk Festival and boasts championship fireworks, decades of polar bear swims, carolling ships and the Kit's Showboat. Our outdoor rec room for beach volleyball, picnics or just chilling out, where a glimpse of one of 80 endangered orcas – our NHL team logo – is as thrilling as any overtime goal.

I count the freighters constantly at anchor in the port (a *raison d'etre* for Confederation). Fifteen, 20, more? Start at the head of the Kinder Morgan/Trudeau Black Snake. Christy says it's now safe to triple pipeline-terminal capacity and increase tanker traffic seven-fold. All converging at the foot of a mountain and major university in a seismic zone. Yet someday, somehow, greenhouse gases will be cut. Highly unlikely (or is it Notley).

The Burnaby Fire Department reports, it's "...not the appropriate location for expansion..." noting, "… significant constraints to emergency/fire response, including safety and effectiveness of firefighters, evacuation, sulphur based gases, toxic smoke plumes and property protection." Wise advice, recalling 2007 when the existing pipeline ruptured, spewing sludge 40 feet in the air, covering homes, trees and wildlife. It dumped 78,000 litres of crude and poisoned 15,000m of shoreline, requiring the evacuation of more than 220 residents.

Over four hundred Aframax tankers have been approved annually, each 245m long, 100m longer than the *Spirit of Vancouver Island* ferry at 167m. Longer than Vancouver's tallest building, the Living Shangri La (200m). Try fathoming that between an index finger and thumb.

Other structural landmark comparisons include the ever-enlarging Alberta tarsands footprint, now the size of Florida. In Calgary, where many cheer the approval of more pipelines, the Husky Tower is only 191m tall, compared to the length of an Aframax tanker (245m). South of the border, outraged resistance rapidly grows in the shadows of the Seattle Space Needle, 60m shorter (184m).

The tankers' huge mass, inertia and steering difficulty necessitate three tugs, a turning diameter of 2km, and 15 minutes to stop. Depth and beam restrictions restrict their travel to daylight hours and they must have a minimum one-mile-visibility, at a maximum six knots, at high tide, with a volume capacity of maximum 80 percent. They sit 13-metres deep, perilously close – 1.5m – to the prescribed maximum draft. Double-hulls, despite Rachel Notley's assurances, are little comfort, having breached elsewhere.

According to the independent group, Concerned Professional Engineers (www.concernedengineers.org), it is "a gross negligence of decision makers to not evaluate risks and consequences of hitting Second Narrows Bridge." Warning of a catastrophic severing of our main transportation artery, they remind us of previous "collisions with the railway bridge by much smaller vessels; twice knocking out service, requiring re-building."

The possibility conjures up the nightmarish collapse during construction of the Second Narrows Bridge on June 17, 1958, indelibly etched in the minds of those alive then; 19 *continued p.19...*

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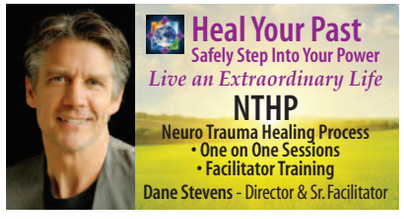
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...***Change agents*** *from pg. 14*

too focused on the indigenous efforts and the dimension of the issue and court battles. It creates a false sense of security amongst the general population that they don't have to be overly concerned because the indigenous people will take the lead and save the day."

Another person to pay attention to and support is the seemingly indefatigable Shirley Samples whose non-stop posts reached some 20,000 followers on two Facebook pages: "Stop Kinder Morgan" and "We Love This Coast." Her posts are a clearinghouse of current news and opportunities to fight back.

It is past time to do more than just share information, sign petitions and hit send. Show up and donate as well. Poll after reliable poll shows that a majority in BC oppose the Christy Clark/Justin Trudeau fossil fuel mega-projects, as much as two-to-one.

Here are just some of the organizations to look up on the Internet: Sierra Club of BC, Greenpeace, STAND (previously ForestEthics), Dogwood Initiative, Georgia Strait Alliance, Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Living Oceans Society, Raincoast Conservation Foundation and the Council of Canadians, as well as smaller grassroots groups such as BROKE (Burnaby Residents Opposing Kinder-Morgan Expansion) and NOPE (North and West Vancouverites Opposed to Pipeline Expansion).

We can learn so much from nature

If you fly over a forest and look down, you'll see every green tree and plant reaching to the heavens to absorb the ultimate energy source: sunlight. What a contrast when you look down on a city or town with its naked roofs, asphalt roads and concrete sidewalks, all ignoring the sun's beneficence! Research shows we might benefit by thinking more like a forest.

Solar roads could be a step in that direction. Roads, sidewalks and parking lots cover massive areas. Using them to generate power means less environmental disturbance, as no new land is needed to house solar power operations.

A French company, Colas, is working with the French National Institute for Solar Energy to test its Wattway technology under various conditions, with a goal of covering 1,000 kilometres of existing highway with thin, durable, skid-resistant crystalline silicon solar panel surfacing over the next four years. They estimate that could provide electricity for five million people. Although critics have raised questions about cost and feasibility, it's not pie-in-the-sky. The technology is being tested and employed throughout the world.

Rooftops are another place to generate power using existing infrastructure. Elon Musk's company, Tesla, is making shingles that double as solar panels. Although they cost more than conventional asphalt shingles, they're comparable in price to higher-end roof tiles and can save money when you factor in the power they generate.

These developing technologies show that, as the world continues to warm, we can and must move beyond our outdated ways. In Canada and elsewhere, the political approach to climate change has often been to avoid discussing it – in part, by firing government scientists or vetting their public statements – and maintaining the status quo by lavishly supporting unproven and risky technologies like carbon capture and storage that keep us tied to fossil fuels for years to come. It's nonsensical to dig up and melt oilsands bitumen, transport and burn it and attempt to capture the emissions and stick them back in the ground where nature had already stored the carbon. Nature took millions of years to do it, but we aren't a patient animal.

Research shows we might benefit by thinking more like a forest.

US science writer Janine Benyus coined the term "biomimicry" to describe technologies based on nature's ability to solve problems or exploit opportunities. It's an important concept because it requires humility and respect for natural processes rather than the imposition of our crude, but powerful, technological innovations.

Every species shares the same challenges: how to get energy and food, avoid predators and disease (even bacteria get viral infections), what to do with waste and how to reproduce. Over long periods, numerous strategies to solve these challenges have evolved. We are a species magnificently adapted for survival, with a massive brain relative to our body size. Unlike any other species, we have the ability to ask questions and seek answers. We can find a treasure trove of solutions in the ways other species have dealt with challenges.

Biomimicry has inspired applications ranging from producing energy through artificial photosynthesis to building lightweight support structures based on the properties of bamboo.

By learning how nature works and how to work within it, we can overcome many problems we've created by trying to jam our technologies on top of natural systems. Fossil fuels were formed when plants absorbed and converted sunlight through photosynthesis hundreds of millions of years ago, then retained that energy when they died, decayed and became compacted and buried deep in the Earth, along with the animals that ate them. Rapidly burning limited supplies of them is absurd, especially when they can be useful for so many other known and possibly yet undiscovered purposes.

Surely, with our knowledge and wisdom we can do better than rely on the primitive idea of burning things to stay warm and comfortable without regard for the consequences – pollution of air, water and land with its related impacts on health, as well as climate change, which is putting humanity's survival at risk.

Our economic systems don't often encourage the most efficient and least harmful ways of providing necessities. They aim for the quickest, easiest, cheapest and most economically profitable paths. We can do better than that. Harnessing the sun's power and learning how nature solves challenges are good places to start.

David Suzuki is a scientist, broadcaster, author and co-founder of the David Suzuki Foundation. Learn more at www.davidsuzuki.org

...***Take a hike*** *from pg. 14*

workers plunged 30m (100 ft) to their deaths. In honour of the lives lost, it was named Ironworkers Memorial Bridge.

Now, the cargo: dilbit. Short for bitumen (asphalt) diluted with petro-products to enable pipeline flow. The exact mix of ingredients is an unexamined trade secret, but tankers hold 30 Olympic-size pools of highly corrosive toxins that sink, unrecoverable, in inevitable spills.

"New approvals are problematic... bordering on irresponsible," says Wendy Palen from SFU's Biological Sciences. From universities across North America, she's just one author of new peer research of more than 9,000 studies.

Their conclusion: claims that a spill can be effectively cleaned up or mitigated are unfounded. No ocean-based studies exist of how dilbit behaves in marine environments, rough seas and changing temperatures.

Christy? Justin? "World leading" science? Is Trudeau's promised $1.5 billion taxpayer-funded response and recovery a deceitful fantasy? "Permission granted" is a surprise to disapproving mayors and First Nations. Two-thirds of those along the 1,150-kilometre route also disagree; 120 nations from both sides of the border drafted a Treaty Alliance Against Tarsands Expansion. As Trudeau/Clark "conditions" are studied – carefully, this time – numerous court cases are prepared.

This shortsighted, national economic fix is just that: a quick shot-in-the-arm for oil addiction, from stranded assets. From the tens of thousands of jobs promised – mere mumbo-jumbo – 50 permanent may materialize. Millions of dollars for the Canadian economy boast foreign owners, who would turn a barely contained trickle through Canada's third largest city into their very own gusher, shipped through the Georgia and Juan de Fuca Straits to foreign markets.

From the seawall – built to buffer, but also to enjoy, nature – their deal resembles the long-ago sale of Manhattan for $24 in beads and trinkets when public land, like air and water, wasn't considered saleable by native inhabitants. A decade ago, a storm devastated Stanley Park. Now, oceans and winds are rising. To risk people's livelihoods for something that few people (customers) want is way, way too risky. Especially since Trump has approved Keystone XL.

In 1986, I wrote a feature for the *Province* entitled, "Miles of sea and sand." I had the incredible experience of talking to folks at many of our beautiful beaches – Wreck Beach, Spanish Banks, Locarno, Jericho, English Bay, Ambleside, Dundarave, Eagle Harbour and Whytecliff. Over and over, people expressed the importance of these landmarks in their everyday lives. For me, these conversations are as memorable and transforming as Expo 86.

Some people know the price of everything, but the value of nothing. With all due – but decreasing – respect, take a hike!

Bruce Mason is a Vancouver and Gabriola-Island based five-string banjo player, gardener, freelance writer and author of Our Clinic. brucemason@shaw.ca

Events

For rates & placements email **editor@commonground.ca**

FEB 7
Health Action Network Society screens Vaxxed: From Cover-up to Catastrophe. Vancouver premier. Story of the cover-up by the Centers for Disease Control of a study that links the MMR vaccine with autism. 2 screenings: 5PM & 7:30PM. Panel discussion later. Tickets $15 & $18. Available through Eventbrite. HANS: 604-435-0512.

FEB 16
Mark Wolynn: Intergenerational Healing. Free talk at Banyen. 6:30-8PM. 3608 W. 4th Avenue, Vancouver. 604-732-7912. www.banyen.com

FEB 17-19
Basic Holistic Foot Reflexology Certificate Weekend Course: Introduction 7:30PM, $10; Course $395 + GST. Pacific Institute of Reflexology 604-875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

FEB 19
Richmond: Free Workshop "Finding True Happiness," Theory/Practice of Inner Light Meditation. 2-4PM, Meditation & Ecology Centre. Registration/Information – Linda: 604-985-5840.

FEB 21
Vancouver: Free Workshop "Finding True Happiness," Theory/Practice of Inner Light Meditation. 6-9PM, Science of Spirituality. Registration/Information – Linda: 604-985-5840.

FEB 23
A Message Of Hope: Maitreya the World Teacher Free Presentation 7PM, Central Library, 350 W. Georgia, Peter Kaye room. www.share-international.ca

FEB 24-26
"The Wonder of YOU!" – a weekend retreat with Burt Harding (burtharding.com) At Krishnamurti Educational Centre of Canada. Beautiful oceanfront setting near Victoria. Register at www.krishnamurti-canada.ca Email programs@krishnamurti-canada.ca, 250-744-3354.

FEB 25-26
Calgary Health Show: Come meet the experts, see the displays, listen to seminars & learn how to make healthy New Year's Resolutions. Stampede Park, BMO Centre, Hall D. www.thehealthshows.com Bring display ad in this issue & receive $2 off admission.

FEB 26
Ari Lazer: Sacred Geometry. Free talk at Banyen. 11:30AM-1PM. 3608 W. 4th Avenue, Vancouver. 604-732-7912. www.banyen.com

MAR 1
Clearmind presents "Setting the Goal: Turning Obstacles Into Opportunities" with Duane & Catherine O'Kane. H.R. MacMillan Space Centre, 1100 Chestnut St., Vancouver. 7:30PM sharp. (to 9PM). Free entry with display ad on this page.

MAR 3-5
The Wellness Show – Celebrating 25 years of wellness: Vancouver Convention Centre, West Building (new). Exhibitors, workshops, demonstrations, seminars. Fri Noon-7PM, Sat 10AM-7PM, Sun 10AM-6PM. $14.50 gen admission. $12.50/seniors. $25/family pass (2 adults & 2 children). Door/cash only. www.thewellnessshow.com

MAR 5-10 (& other dates)
NLP & Hypnosis Certification Trainings in Whistler, BC: Mar 5-10 (or Sept 18-23) NLP Practitioner. Act now to save $1,000 / Apr 27-May11: NLP Master Practitioner / Oct 21-Nov 6: NLP Trainer's Training Level / Nov 8-12: Hypnosis Trainer's Training. www.greatnessu.com, 1-866-939-8862.

MAR 10-12
"Self-Inquiry and Inner Transformation" – a weekend retreat with Ravi Ravindra (ravindra.ca) At Krishnamurti Educational Centre of Canada. Beautiful oceanfront setting near Victoria. Register at www.krishnamurti-canada.ca Email programs@krishnamurti-canada.ca, 250-744-3354.

MAR 10-12
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APR 7-9
The Inner Sexual Pathways: A shamanic workshop for men & women. In Vancouver. Reconnect to your true sexual nature. Re-ignite your sexual energy. Hosted by the Institute of Shamanic Medicine. www.shamanicmedicine.ca info@shamanicmedicine.ca

APR 22-23
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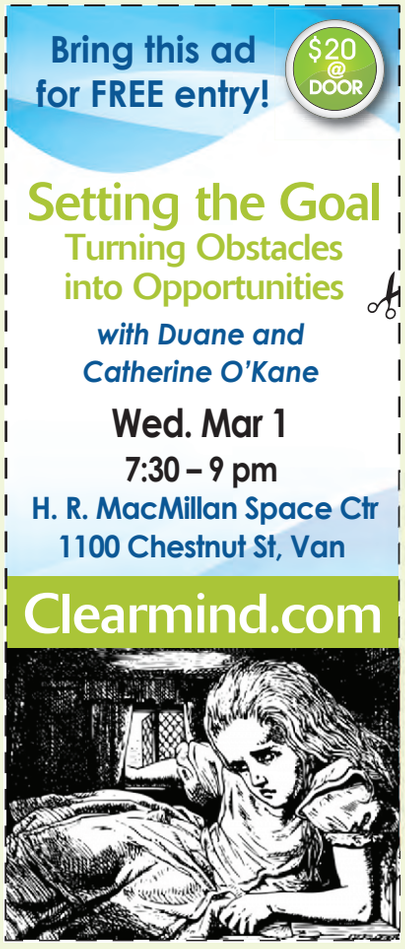
Soul Mind Body Meditation: The way to well-being. 7 PM, Roundhouse,181 Roundhouse Mews, Vancouver 778.379.9920. JoyOfTrueLife.com



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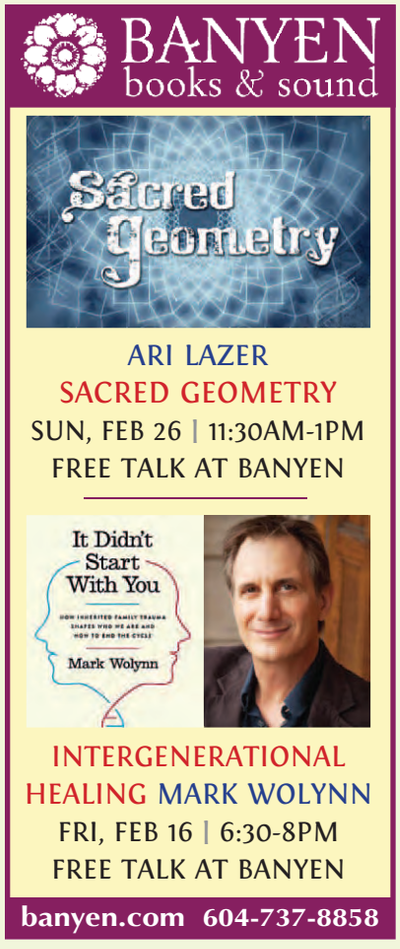

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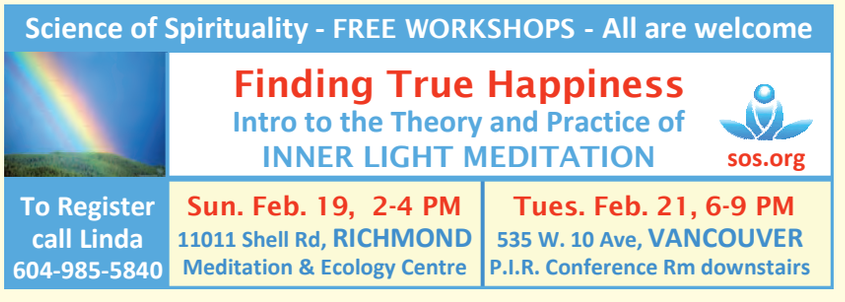
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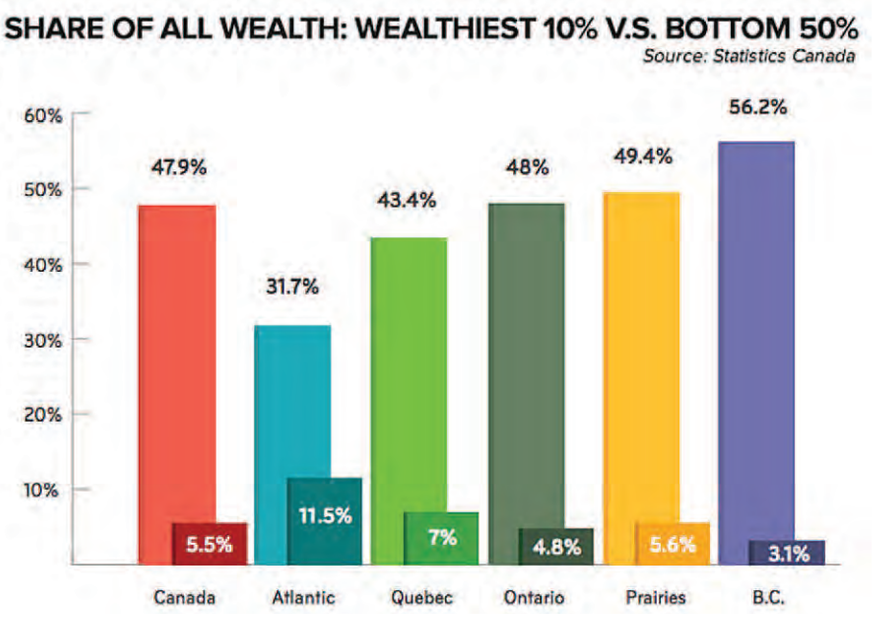
*...**Can't afford** from pg. 6*

bottom 50% sunk just as dramatically, as then-Liberal-premier Gordon Campbell introduced regressive tax policies to disproportionately benefit fat cats.

PressProgress also quotes the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, noting that the BC Liberals' "decade of tax cuts" and "regressive changes to the provincial tax system" helped to "exacerbate growing income inequality," a practice perfected in Christy's reign. The BC Poverty Reduction Coalition reports our provincial income gap is growing the fastest in Canada, noting, "The average household income of the top 1% in BC has increased by 36%" since the mid-2000s; the most current data from StatCan highlights that 10% in BC now own more than half of the wealth in our province.



The results are ubiquitous across BC. More people are slipping through gaping cracks into homelessness, joining the skyrocketing number of workers with full-time jobs sinking beneath the poverty line. Half of the folks in BC who turned to food banks in 2016 were low-wage breadwinners, up 3.4% from 2015. We have the highest child poverty rate in the country and we are the only province with no poverty reduction plan. More than 12% of BC wage earners reported dealing with food insecurity in 2016, along with Canada's highest rents and lowest business taxes.

Our heel-dragging BC Liberals' minimum wage was frozen at $8/hr. for a decade, before gradually and reluctantly rising to $10.85/hr (2016), still Canada's lowest. One-quarter of BC's workforce – half a million folks – currently earn under $15/hr, well below what most families need to make ends meet. As wages stagnate, costs for food housing and child-care costs are rising. In Vancouver, the price of a detached home jumped 19 times, relative to median household income, and the ratio for condos increased six times.

The obvious next question from any patient who receives such a stark diagnosis would be: "How long have I got?" The answer: until the provincial election, May 9, 2017.

Clark, whose attention span resembles a hummingbird, is taking time out from serving her corporate donors to beak about the Liberals' truly laughable, much too-late, inadequate and distractive efforts on affordable housing investment, clean tech innovation, etc.

Warning: watch your diet, including the flood of sugary, big-budget government junk infotainment. And exercise is recommended, such as protest marching, volunteering and door knocking on behalf of more organic and healthy alternatives. The Liberal status quo is unsustainable, even downright dangerous, for you and your friends and family – especially your children.

Please email the issues in BC that concern you most to: brucemason@shaw.ca.

Internet freedom: a make-or-break year

2017 is here and it's clear it will be a make-or-break year for Internet freedom. Around the world, our digital rights are under threat as never before. Let's take a look at some of the big challenges ahead.

In Canada, the federal government will soon be publishing its response to the National Security consultation that closed in December. It's abundantly clear Canadians want the government to repeal Bill C-51 and deliver strong privacy rules to make us safe – but will the government listen, especially against the backdrop of a full-on RCMP propaganda campaign calling for even more invasive spy powers?

Also in Canada, the government is under pressure from industry lobbyists pushing a costly, new Internet Tax, a proposal that expert Michael Geist has called a "digital tax on everything." This is a terrible idea that will deepen the digital divide and force even more Canadians offline, in a country where low-income and rural residents are already struggling to stay connected. If the government pursues this, expect a big fight ahead.

South of the border, Donald Trump's recent inauguration as president means he has secured, not just the keys to the Oval Office, but also sweeping, new powers to shape the future of the Internet for generations to come.

Based on Trump's statements, we can expect to see a dramatic expansion of NSA and FBI spying powers. Worryingly, there are very few oversight mechanisms or limitations on what Trump can do with this power. And given that so much surveillance activity takes place under a veil of near-total secrecy, it will be extremely difficult for citizens to hold Trump effectively to account.

We can expect to see a dramatic expansion of NSA and FBI spying powers.

With Trump in office, we're also anticipating a full-on assault on the hard-fought Net Neutrality consumer protections that millions fought so hard for at the Federal Communications Commission just two years ago. Net Neutrality rules ensure that Internet users get to decide what to watch online and when, rather than having giant telcos make those decisions for us.

Without Net Neutrality, your telecom provider could decide which websites to speed up and which to slow down – effectively creating an Internet Slow Lane for everyone except deep-pocketed conglomerates. Put simply, Net Neutrality is essential for a free and open Internet and we'll need to pull out all the stops to defend it.

Elsewhere, MEPs in the EU are considering controversial proposals from the European Commission to impose a new ancillary copyright fee – effectively a Link Tax – on anyone who shares links and accompanying snippets of information online. The Link Tax will have a devastating impact on access to information and freedom of expression and we'll be working hard to convince MEPs to block this reckless idea.

With so many tough fights ahead, 2017 will be a pivotal year for digital rights. But if the history of the pro-Internet movement can teach us anything, it's that the more challenging the times, the more inspiring the response – and there's no doubt we'll need to mobilize millions of people around the world if we're to successfully protect our basic rights over the weeks and months to come.

Keep in touch at OpenMedia.org and on Facebook https://facebook.com/openmediaorg and see our Twitter https://twitter.com/openmediaorg feeds for all the latest.

David Christopher is communications manager for OpenMedia, which works to keep the Internet open, affordable and surveillance-free. openmedia.org

People power will stop Woodfibre LNG

Last month, MLA Jordan Sturdy and MP Jonathan Wilkinson hosted a meeting in Squamish with local government and indigenous leaders with the goal "to enhance transparency with respect to progress of the (Woodfibre LNG) project."

More than 150 supporters stood outside to voice their opposition to Woodfibre LNG, as their representatives walked into the meeting at Squamish Municipal Hall, with banners reading "No Pipelines, No Tankers, No Woodfibre LNG." People travelled from as far away as Vancouver, Bowen Island, Whistler and the Sunshine Coast, taking time off work on a Friday morning.

"Woodfibre LNG has donated more than $60,000 to the BC Liberals in 2016 alone. That's pretty cheap to buy a rubber stamp for your environmental assessment. But Woodfibre LNG is not a done deal. Every community around Howe Sound has expressed their opposition to Woodfibre LNG. More than 10,000 people have signed the Howe Sound Declaration in opposition to Woodfibre LNG. People power will stop this project," said Tracey Saxby, one of the co-founders of My Sea to Sky.

Following the demonstration, supporters wrote messages to their representatives in chalk:

"BC LNG is one big lie."
"Focus on renewable energy."
"Save Howe Sound."
"For our kids."

LNG tankers put Howe Sound residents at risk

Based on International Safety Standards, we know that Howe Sound is the wrong place for an LNG export facility. Canada still doesn't have any safety regulations for LNG tankers and the information being used by the Technical Review Process of Marine Systems and Transhipment (TERMPOL) to develop LNG tanker regulations is old or flawed. Public safety is not being taken seriously.

Woodfibre LNG threatens the recovery of Howe Sound

Millions of taxpayer dollars have been spent cleaning up the toxic legacies of previous industries, such as the Nexen chemical plant, the Woodfibre pulp mill and the Britannia Beach mine. As a direct result, Howe Sound is slowly recovering: the herring and the whales are coming back. Woodfibre LNG threatens this recovery through underwater noise, which impacts herring, salmon, whales and other wildlife.

Air pollution from Woodfibre LNG will impact public health at a social cost of over $20 million per year.

Millions of taxpayer dollars have been spent cleaning up the toxic legacies of previous industries, such as the Nexen chemical plant, the Woodfibre pulp mill and the Britannia Beach mine.

Even though Woodfibre LNG is using electricity as the main power source, there will still be significant air pollution during operation. Woodfibre LNG is estimating air pollution emissions of 295.7 tonnes of nitrous oxides (NOx) and 43.8 tonnes of sulfur dioxide (SO2) every year.

Source: **My Sea to Sky**, a volunteer organization that was started in early 2014 in opposition to the proposed Woodfibre LNG project. More than 10,000 supporters have signed the Howe Sound declaration. www.myseatosky.org

...***Supplement*** *from pg. 8*

get enough fish in the diet, try a supplement such as salmon or krill oil. Make sure it is high quality and contains the naturally occurring astaxanthin, a potent antioxidant that will protect the heart and arteries from free radical damage and inflammation. Alternatively, if you're vegetarian/vegan, your best bet is to supplement with algae oil. Be careful with consuming excess flax oil as it oxidizes very quickly and can actually cause more damage than good. Buy it in small quantities and never heat it.

People who die from heart attacks have lower than average levels of magnesium in their systems.

Magnesium is an extremely important mineral for the health of our hearts. It is well proven that people who die from heart attacks have lower than average levels of magnesium in their systems. This mineral can increase energy production within the heart muscle; it dilates arteries to allow better blood flow, and can improve heart rate. At the least, men should get 350mg and women, 300mg of magnesium daily. You can find magnesium in all green, leafy vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds and whole grains. Food should always be your number one choice for getting nutrients, however, with the depletion of our soils, it can be difficult to get enough magnesium in our diets. It is now advisable for everyone to supplement with this mineral. As a general daily dose, choose 200-400mg of a highly absorbable chelate such as magnesium bisglycinate.

Garlic has been used successfully in reducing platelet aggregation, part of the early stages of atherosclerotic plaque. It is an excellent blood thinner and will help reduce high blood pressure. If you choose to increase the garlic in your diet, make sure it is raw and consume it very quickly after crushing. The medicinal compounds, specifically the allicin, are very reactive and will diminish rapidly. Heat will also destroy these compounds, so add your garlic in right at the end of cooking. There are many supplements available that try to outsmart nature; I still think it's a wise choice to simply eat what the Earth gives us. However, if you choose to supplement, aged garlic extract may be the answer. It is rich in S-allyl-cysteine, a compound that shows a high bioavailability and strong antioxidant activity. This may be the more important ingredient to look for, rather than the allicin, in a garlic supplement.

Coenzyme Q10 (CoQ10) is a vital part of ATP production in our hearts. ATP is the energy currency in our cells that give our hearts the life force they need to pump blood through our bodies. By supplementing with CoQ10, studies have shown an increase in cardiac output and stroke volume. It is especially important to take extra CoQ10 if you're on statin drugs to lower cholesterol, as these pharmaceuticals diminish the body's CoQ10 levels. It is sadly ironic that we would take a drug to supposedly protect our cardiovascular system and end up suffering a heart attack as a side effect. CoQ10 can be found in organ meats such as liver, heart, kidneys, and also in fatty fish, red meat and eggs. If you're a vegetarian, you can find it in smaller amounts in peanuts, broccoli, cauliflower and spinach. Make sure your animal sources are organic and free-range, as this will greatly increase the levels of CoQ10 in the product. If you choose to supplement, there is a broad range, from 30 mg to 300 mg depending on one's individual needs. It is also worth noting that the ubiquinol form is better absorbed and utilized by the body.

Vitamin K2 is now in the spotlight as the missing ingredient in cardiovascular health. K2 ensures the calcium we ingest through food or supplements finds its way to our bones rather than depositing in our arteries. Atherosclerotic plaque consists of calcium, fats, cholesterol and other debris. It is clear now in the scientific literature that cholesterol and saturated fats are not the bad guys when it comes to plaque formation; it's actually excess and displaced calcium. Taking a calcium supplement without adequate K2 levels in the body will increase our risk for heart disease. K2 is found in animal products such as meat, eggs and dairy. But make sure they are grass-fed as this greatly increases the K2 content. Green leafy vegetables are only a source of vitamin K1. While very good for you, it does not have the bone and artery protective benefits of K2. Our body can synthesize K2 from our gut bacteria, and to a small degree from K1, however, it is highly beneficial to supplement with this heart and bone protective nutrient. Aim for about 120 mcg per day.

Most of us don't give much thought to our hearts; they unconsciously beat away inside our chests. February is here to remind us not to take them for granted. Our hearts need love, emotionally and physically. Take the time this month to really appreciate the amazing muscle that pumps life throughout our bodies. Eat heart healthy whole foods, supplement wisely and get that heart pumping with daily movement.

Happy Valentines Day!

Note: If you are currently taking medication or have been diagnosed with heart disease, it is always wise to talk with your doctor or pharmacists before embarking on a new supplement program.

Originally published at healthywaynaturalfoods.com
Krista Boulding is a holistic nutritionist through the Edison Institute (www.edisoninst.com) and a level-2 nutrition coach through Precision Nutrition (precisionnutrition.com). She provides private nutrition consultations, group wellness programs, and offers a variety of nutrition-based lectures throughout the year. Krista believes that true health can only be achieved through a combination of self love, nourishing whole foods and specific lifestyle practices. She is passionate about all things related to food, life and fitness. Find out more about her at www.kbstrengthandwellness.com

...***Free at last*** *from pg. 5*

breaches the spirit of NAFTA.

These disputes are not heard by Canadian judges in Canadian courts, but by special tribunals operating behind closed doors, using not Canadian law, but NAFTA rules. There is no right of appeal. Since 1994, Canada has been sued 35 times by US corporations under NAFTA, reversed several of its laws, paid out $200 million in NAFTA fines and faces claims of $6 billion more. The US has not lost a single case.

(NA)FTA gave US corporations sweeping rights to buy up most of the Canadian economy. Called "national treatment," it prohibits Canada from restricting or screening new US investment in Canada and grants American investors, citizens and corporations the right to be treated as if they were Canadian citizens. With a low dollar and low interest rates, the wholesale take-over of Canadian companies is proceeding in a torrent. Our standard of living and real wages have declined, jobs and factories have disappeared and almost a million Canadians now use food banks.

Freed from (NA)FTA, Canada could go on to use its natural resources to create Canadian owned and controlled industries, with all the benefits and security that could mean for Canadians. Instead of spending hundreds of billions of dollars on foreign machinery, electronics, ships, aircraft and jet fighters, we could build our own. We once created the world's most advanced jet fighter, the Avro Arrow, so we know it can be done. Canada is a huge market for foreign automobiles. Countries from Korea to Italy and Sweden, far smaller than Canada, with a fraction of our resources, have built their own auto industries. So could we.

Our founding fathers would be outraged at the giveaway of our raw resources and the casual sale of our railways and iconic corporations: from Hudson's Bay to Stelco, the dismantling of the Canadian Wheat Board, built by western farmers and given away for a song, and Nortel, Canada's giant, high tech powerhouse, allowed to go down, its parts picked up by Google and its other foreign competitors.

For 150 years, great Canadian leaders have warned that, without an economic border, Canada would not long have a political border with the US. John A. Macdonald called free trade with the US "veiled treason." A century later, Pierre Elliott Trudeau called the FTA a "monstrous swindle."

Both John A. Macdonald and Georges-Étienne Cartier were determined to build Canada into "a northern power," a competitor to the US, not a resource colony. We can see their vision in the magnificent Parliament buildings they left us, the world class railways they built to bind the country together and one of the world's longest lasting and most admired constitutions.

The idea that Canada would sign away its precious non-renewable resources to another country, our greatest competitor, and that it would allow itself, at the whim of foreign corporations, to be sued for following its own goals, would have been unthinkable to our founders. Let's take this chance to get out of these destructive agreements, the FTA and NAFTA, stand on our own two feet and make Canada an independent power on the world stage.

David Orchard is a farmer and the author of **The Fight for Canada: Four Centuries of Resistance to American Expansionism.** davidorchard.com
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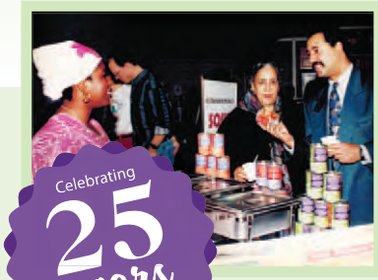

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